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## United States Senate

November 27, 2017

Tom Morris, MPA  
Associate Administrator  
Federal Office of Rural Health Policy  
Health Resources and Services Administration  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville, MD 20857

*Re: The Rural Maternity Medical Home Access Consortium Application for Funding from the  
Rural Health Care Services Outreach Program – HRSA-18-030*

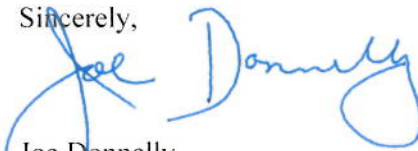
Dear Mr. Morris:

As Senator from the State of Indiana and a member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, I have a special place in my heart for the rural residents of the State. Unfortunately, like many Americans, rural Hoosiers lack access to effective health services, including critical prenatal and perinatal care. Many rural areas suffer from significant socio-economic disparities including high rates of disconnected youth, food insecurity, and poverty. These factors increase the risk of premature birth, low birthrate and increased infant mortality. In fact, Indiana has the eighth-highest infant mortality rate in the country, according to the CDC. Because of this, I support the efforts of the Rural Maternity Medical Home Access Consortium (the Consortium) led by the Indiana Rural Health Association (IRHA) to improve access to enhanced perinatal care services to low-income pregnant women.

The Consortium is a collaboration between IRHA, and community health care providers, that will focus on reducing the risks that contribute to low birth weight through education, behavioral health access and community. The Consortium will adopt the CMS Innovation Initiative: *Strong Start for Mothers and Newborns Project – Maternity Medical Home Enhanced Prenatal Care Model*. As part of this approach, it will use Centering Pregnancy, an evidence-based practice model as a way to organize and coordinate care. Their efforts will target high-risk, low-income pregnant women in a six-county region in west central Indiana.

Indiana Rural Health Association is dedicated to improving the delivery of healthcare services for the underserved rural population of Indiana. I encourage a favorable review of this application for funding in accordance with U.S. law and public policy. I would appreciate being notified when a decision is made. Questions and announcements can be directed to my office by contacting Marianne Black at [Marianne\\_Black@donnelly.senate.gov](mailto:Marianne_Black@donnelly.senate.gov) or at (317) 226-5555.

Sincerely,



Joe Donnelly  
United States Senator